

T H E

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English Merchant,

A

COMEDY.

As it is ACTED at the

Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane

By GEORGE COLMAN.

*Te illiusmodi jam magna nobis civium
Penuria est. Homo antiquâ virtute ac fide:
Haud esto mali quid ortum ex hoc sit publice.
Quam gaudeo, ubi etiam hujus generis reliquos
Restare video!*

TER.

D U B L I N :

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and W. COLLES. 1767.

TO
MONSIEUR DE VOLTAIRE
THE FOLLOWING COMEDY,
A TRIBUTE
DUE TO THE AUTHOR OF
L'ECOSSAISE,
IS INSCRIBED
BY HIS MOST OBEDIENT
HUMBLE SERVANT,

GEORGE COLMAN.



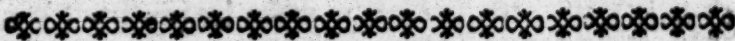


T H E

English Merchant,

A

C O M E D Y.



A C T I.

SCENE, *A room in Mrs. Goodman's house.*

Enter MOLLY, struggling with SPATTER.

MOLLY.

 E quiet, Mr. Spatter ! let me alone ! Pray
 B  now, Sir ! It is a strange thing a body
 can't go about the house without being
pester'd with your impertinence—Why
sure !

Spat. Introduce me to your mistress then—come,
there's a good girl !—and I will tease you no longer.

Mol. Indeed I shan't—Introduce you to my lady !
for what, pray ?

Spat. Oh ! for a thousand things. To laugh, to
hat, to take a dish of tea, to—

Mol. You drink tea with my lady ! I should not
have thought of that—On what acquaintance ?

B

Spat,

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Spat. The most agreeable in the world, child! a new acquaintance.

Mol. Indeed you mistake yourself mightily—you are not a proper acquaintance for a person of her quality, I assure you, Sir!

Spat. Why, what quality is she, then?

Mol. Much too high quality for your acquaintance, I promise you. What! a poet-man! that sits write, write, write, all day long, scribbling a pack of nonsense for the news papers!—You're fit for nothing above a chambermaid.

Spat. That's as much as to say, that you think me just fit for you. Eh, child!

Mol. No, indeed, not I, Sir. Neither my lady nor I will have any thing to say to you.

Spat. Your mistress and you both give yourselves a great many airs, my dear. Your poverty, I think, might pull down your pride.

Mol. What does the fellow mean by poverty?

Spat. I mean that you are starving.

Mol. Oh the slanderous monster! We! Starving! Who told you so? I'd have you to know, Sir, my lady has a very great fortune.

Spat. So 'tis a sign, by her way of life and appearance.

Mol. Well; she lives privately, indeed, because she loves retirement; she goes plain, because she hates dress; she keeps no table, because she is an enemy to luxury.—In short, my lady is as rich as a Jew, and you are an impertinent coxcomb.

Spat. Come, come, I know more of your mistress than you imagine.

Mol. And what do you know of her?

Spat. Oh, I know what I know.

Mol. Well!

[*Alarmed.*

Spat. I know who she is, and where she came from; I am very well acquainted with her family, and know her whole history.

Mol. How can that be?

Spat. Very easily—I have correspondence every where.

where. As private as she may think herself, it is not the first time that I have seen or heard of Amelia.

Mol. Oh gracious ! as sure as I am alive this man will discover us. [*Apart.*] Mr. Spatter, my dear Mr. Spatter, if you know any thing, sure you would not be so cruel as to betray us !

Spat. My dear Mr. Spatter ! O ho ! I have guess'd ght—there is something then.

Mol. No, Sir, there is nothing at all ; nothing that signifies to you or any body else.

Spat. Well, well, I'll say nothing ; but then you must—

Mol. What ?

Spat. Come, kiss me, hussy !

Mol. I say kiss you, indeed.

Spat. And you'll introduce me to your mistress.

Mol. Not I, I promise you.

Spat. Nay, no mysteries between you and me, child ! Come ; here's the key to all locks, the clue to every maze, and the discloser of all secrets ; money, child ! Here, take this purse ; you see I know something ; tell me the rest, and I have the fellow to it in my pocket.

Mol. Ha, ha, ha ! poor Mr. Spatter ! Where could you get all this money, I wonder ! Not by your poetries, I believe. But what signifies telling you any thing, when you are acquainted with our whole history already ? You have correspondence every where, you know. There, Sir, take up your filthy purse again, and remember that I scorn to be obliged to any body but my mistress.

Spat. There's impudence for you ! when to my certain knowledge your mistress has not a guinea in the world ; you live in continual fear of being discovered ; and you will both be utterly undone in a fortnight, unless Lord Falbridge should prevent it, by taking Amelia under his protection. You understand me, child.

Mol. You scandalous wretch ! Did you ever hear such a monster ? I won't stay a moment longer with him—But you are quite mistaken about me and my

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mistress, I assure you, Sir. We are in the best circumstances in the world ; we have nothing to fear ; and we don't care a farthing for you.—So your servant, Mr. Poet ! [Exit.

Spatter alone.

Your servant, Mrs. Pert. “ We are in the best circumstances in the world.” Ay, that is as much as to say, they are in the utmost distress. “ We have nothing to fear.” That is, they are frightened out of their wits. “ And we don't care a farthing for you.” Meaning, that they will take all the care in their power, that I shall not find them out. But I may be too hard for you yet, young gentlewoman ! I have earned but a poor livelihood by mere scandal and abuse ; but if I could once arrive at doing a little substantial mischief, I should make my fortune.

Enter Mrs. Goodman.

Oh ! your servant, Mrs. Goodman. Your's is the most unfociable lodging-house in town. So many ladies, and only one gentleman ! and you won't take the least notice of him.

Mrs. G. How so, Mr. Spatter ?

Spat. Why, did not you promise to introduce me to Amelia ?

Mrs. G. To tell you the plain truth, Mr. Spatter, she don't like you. And, indeed, I don't know how it is, but you make yourself a great many enemies.

Spat. Yes ; I believe I do raise a little envy.

Mrs. G. Indeed you are mistaken, Sir. As you are lodger of mine, it makes me quite uneasy to hear what the world says of you. How do you contrive to make so many enemies, Mr. Spatter ?

Spat. Because I have merit, Mrs. Goodman.

Mrs. G. May be so ; but nobody will allow it but yourself. They say that you set up for a wit indeed ; but that you deal in nothing but scandal, and think of nothing but mischief.

Spat.

Spat. I do speak ill of the men sometimes, to be sure ; but then I have a great regard for women—provided they are handsome ; and that I may give you a proof of it, introduce me to Amelia.

Mrs. G. You must excuse me ; she and you would be the worst company in the world ; for she never speaks too well of herself, nor the least ill of any body else. And then her virtue——

Spat. Pooh, pooh, she speaks ill of nobody, because she knows nobody ; and as for her virtue, ha, ha !

Mrs. G. You don't believe much in that, I suppose ?

Spat. I have not over-much faith, Mrs. Goodman. Lord Falbridge, perhaps, may give a better account of it.

Mrs. G. Lord Falbridge can say nothing but what would be extremely to her honour, I assure you, Sir. [*Spatter laughs*] Well, well, you may laugh, but it is very true.

Spat. Oh, I don't doubt it ; but you don't tell the whole truth, Mrs. Goodman. When any of your friends or acquaintance sit for their pictures, you draw a very flattering likeness. All characters have their dark side, and if they have but one eye, you give them in *profile*. Your great friend, Mr. Freeport, for instance, whom you are always praising for his benevolent actions——

Mrs. G. He is benevolence itself, Sir.

Spat. Yes, and grossness itself too. I remember him these many years. He always cancels an obligation by the manner of conferring it : and does you a favour, as if he were going to knock you down.

Mrs. G. A truce with your satire, good Mr. Spatter. Mr. Freeport is my best friend ; I owe him every thing ; and I can't endure the slightest reflection on his character. Besides, he can have given no offence to Lady Alton, whatever may be the case with Amelia.

Spat. Lady Alton ! she is a particular friend of mine to be sure ; but between you and me, Mrs. Good-

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man, a more ridiculous character than any you have mentioned. A *bel esprit* forsooth! and as vain of her beauty as learning; without any great portion of either. A fourth Grace, and a tenth Muse! who fancies herself enamour'd of Lord Falbridge, because she would be proud of such a conquest; and has lately bestowed some marks of distinction on me, because she thinks it will give her credit among persons of letters.

Mrs. G. Nay, if you can't spare your own friends, I don't wonder at your attacking mine—and so, Sir, your humble servant.—But stay; here's a post-chaise stopp'd at our door; and here comes a servant with a portmanteau! 'Tis the gentleman for whom my first floor was taken, I suppose.

Spat. Very likely: well, you will introduce me to him at least, Mrs. Goodman.

Enter a servant with a portmanteau—Sir William Douglas following.

Sir W. You are Mrs. Goodman, I suppose, Madam?

Mrs. G. At your service, Sir.

Sir W. Mr. Owen, I believe, has secured apartments here?

Mrs. G. He has, Sir.

Sir W. They are for me, Madam—Have you any other lodgers?

Mrs. G. Only that gentleman, Sir, and a young lady——

Spat. Of great beauty and virtue. Eh Mrs. Goodman?

Mrs. G. She has both, Sir; but you will see very little of her, for she lives in the most retired manner in the world.

Sir W. Her youth and beauty are matter of great indifference to me; for I shall be as much a recluse as herself.—Are there any news at present stirring in London?

Mrs.

A C O M E D Y.

T

Mrs. G. Mr. Spatter can inform you, Sir, for he deals in news. In the mean while, I'll prepare your apartments.
(*Exit, followed by the Servant.*)

Manent Sir William Douglas, and Spatter ; Sir William walks up and down without taking notice of Spatter.

Spat. This must be a man of quality by his ill manners. I'll speak to him (*aside.*) [*to Sir William*] Will your Lordship give me leave—

Sir W. Lordship! I am no Lord; Sir, and must beg not to be honoured with the name.

Spat. It is a kind of mistake, that cannot displease at least.

Sir W. I don't know that. None but a fool would be vain of a title, if he had one; and none but an impostor would assume a title, to which he has no right.

Spat. Oh, you're of the House of Commons then, a member of parliament, and are come up to town to attend the sessions, I suppose, Sir?

Sir W. No matter what I am, Sir.

Spat. Nay, no offence, I hope, Sir. All I meant was to do you honour. Being concerned in two evening posts and one morning-paper, I was willing to know the proper manner of announcing your arrival.

Sir W. You have connections with the press then, it seems, Sir?

Spat. Yes, Sir; I am an humble retainer to the Muses, an author. I compose pamphlets on all subjects, compile magazines, and do news-papers.

Sir W. Do news-papers! What do you mean by that, Sir?

Spat. That is, Sir, I collect the articles of news from the other papers and make new ones for the postscript, translate the mails, write occasional letters from Cato and Theatricus, and give fictitious answers to supposed correspondents.

Sir W.

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Sir *W.* A very ingenious as well as honourable employment, I must confess, Sir.

Spat. Some little genius is requisite, to be sure. Now, Sir, if I can be of any use to you—if you have any friend to be praised, or any enemy to be abused; any author to cry up, or minister to run down; my pen and talents are entirely at your service.

Sir *W.* I am much obliged to you, Sir, but at present I have not the least occasion for either. In return for your genteel offers, give me leave to trouble you with one piece of advice. When you deal in private scandal, have a care of the cudgel; and when you meddle with publick matters, beware of the pillory?

Spat. How, Sir! are you no friend to literature? Are you an enemy to the liberty of the press?

Sir *W.* I have the greatest respect for both; but railing is the disgrace of letters, and personal abuse the scandal of freedom: foul-mouthed criticks, are in general disappointed authors; and they, who are the loudest against ministers, only mean to be paid for their silence.

Spat. That may be sometimes, Sir; but give me leave to ask you—

Sir *W.* Do not ask me at present, Sir! I see a particular friend of mine coming this way, and I must beg you to withdraw!

Spat. Withdraw, Sir! first of all, allow me to—

Sir *W.* Nay, no reply! we must be in private. (*Thrusting out Spatter.*) What a wretch! as contemptible as mischievous. Our generous mastiffs fly at men from an instinct of courage; but this fellow's attacks proceed from an instinct of baseness—But here comes the faithful Owen, with as many good qualities as that execrable fellow seems to have bad ones,

Enter

Enter Owen.

Well, Owen, I am safe arrived you see.

Owen. Ah, Sir! would to heaven you were as safe returned again! Have a care of betraying yourself to be Sir William Douglas!—During your stay here, your name is Ford, remember.

Sir W. I shall take care—But tell me your news—What have you done since your arrival? Have you heard any thing of my daughter? Have you seen Lord Brumpton? Has he any hope of obtaining my pardon?

Owen. He had, Sir.

Sir W. And what can have destroyed it then?

Owen. My Lord Brumpton is dead, Sir.

Sir W. Dead!

Owen. I saw him within this week in apparent good health; he promised to exert his whole interest in your favour; by his own appointment I went to wait on him yesterday noon, when I was stunned with the news of his having died suddenly the evening before.

Sir W. My Lord Brumpton dead! the only friend I had remaining in England; the only person, on whose intercession I relied for my pardon. Cruel fortune! I have now no hope but to find my daughter. Tell me, Owen; have you been able to hear any tidings of her?

Owen. Alas, Sir, none that are satisfactory. On the death of Mr. Andrews, in whose care you left her, being cruelly abandoned by the relation who succeeded to the estate, she left the country some months ago, and has not since been heard of.

Sir W. Unhappy there too! When will the measure of my misfortunes be full? When will the malice of my fate be satisfied? Proscribed, condemned, attainted (alas, but too justly!) I have lost my rank, my estate, my wife, my son, and all my family. One only daughter remains. Perhaps a wretched wanderer like myself, perhaps in the extremest indigence

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gence, perhaps dishonoured—Ha ! that thought distracts me.

Owen. My dear master, have patience ! Do not be ingenious to torment yourself, but consult your safety, and prepare for your departure.

Sir W. No, Owen. Hearing, providentially, of the death of my friend Andrews, paternal care and tenderness drew me hither ; and I will not quit the kingdom till I learn something of my child, my dear Amelia, whom I left a tender innocent in the arms of the best of women twenty years ago. Her sex demands protection ; and she is now of an age, in which she is more exposed to misfortunes than even in helpless infancy.

Owen. Be advised ; depart, and leave that care to me. Consider ; your life is now at stake.

Sir W. My life has been too miserable to render me very solicitous for its preservation—But the completion of the times is changed ; the very name of the party, in which I was unhappily engaged, is extinguished, and the whole nation is unanimously devoted to the throne. Disloyalty and insurrection are now no more, and the sword of justice is suffered to sleep. If I can find my child, and find her worthy of me, I will fly with her to take refuge in some foreign country ; if I am discovered in the search, I have still some hopes of mercy.

Owen. Heaven grant your hopes may be well founded !

Sir W. Come, Owen ! let us behave at least with fortitude in our adversity ! Follow me to my apartment, and let us consult what measures we shall take in searching for Amelia. [Exeunt.

Scene changes to Amelia's apartment.

Amelia and Molly.

Amel. Poor Molly ! to be teased with that odious fellow, Spatter !

Mol. But Madam, Mr. Spatter says he is acquainted with your whole history.

Amel.

Amel. Mere pretence, in order to render himself formidable. Be on your guard against him, my dear Molly; and remember to conceal my misery from him and all the world. I can bear poverty, but am not proof against insult and contempt.

Mol. Ah, my dear mistress, it is to no purpose to endeavour to hide it from the world. They will see poverty in my looks. As for you, you can live upon the air; the greatness of your soul seems to support you; but lack-a-day, I shall grow thinner and thinner every day of my life.

Amel. I can support my own distress, but yours touches me to the soul. Poor Polly! the labour of my hands shall feed and cloath you—Here! dispose of this embroidery to the best advantage; what was formerly my amusement, must now become the means of our subsistence. Let us be obliged to nobody, but owe our support to industry and virtue.

Mol. You're an angel: let me kiss those dear hands that have worked this precious embroidery; let me bathe them with my tears! You're an angel upon earth. I had rather starve in your service, than live with a princess. What can I do to comfort you?

Amel. Thou faithful creature—only continue to be secret: you know my real character; you know I am in the utmost distress: I have opened my heart to you; but you will plant a dagger there if you betray me to the world.

Mol. Ah, my dear mistress, how should I betray you! I go no where, I converse with nobody but yourself and Mrs. Goodman: besides, the world is very indifferent about other people's misfortunes.

Amel. The world is indifferent, it is true; but it is curious, and takes a cruel pleasure in tearing open the wounds of the unfortunate. [*Enter Mrs. Goodman.*] Mrs. Goodman!

Mrs. G. Excuse me, Madam: I took the liberty of waiting on you to receive your commands. 'Tis now near three o'clock. You have provided
nothing

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nothing for dinner, and have scarce taken any refreshment these three days.

Amel. I have been indisposed.

Mrs. G. I am afraid you are more than indisposed—You are unhappy—Pardon me! but I cannot help thinking that your fortune is unequal to your appearance.

Amel. Why should you think so? You never heard me complain of my fortune.

Mrs. G. No, but I have too much reason to believe it is inferior to your merit.

Amel. Indeed, you flatter me.

Mrs. G. Come, come; you must not indulge this melancholy. I have a new lodger, an elderly gentleman, just arrived, who does me the honour to partake of my dinner; and I must have your company too. He seems to be in trouble, as well as you. You must meet; two persons in affliction may perhaps become a consolation to each other. Come, let us take some care of you.

Amel. Be assured, Mrs. Goodman, I am much obliged to you for your attention to me; but I want nothing.

Mrs. G. Dear Madam! you say you want nothing, and you are in want of every thing.

Enter Servant.

Serv. (to Mrs. Good.) Lady Alton, Madam, sends her compliments, and will wait upon you after dinner.

Mrs. G. Very well; my best respects to her Ladyship, and I shall be ready to attend her. (*Exit Servant.*) There, there is one cause of your uneasiness! Lady Alton's visit is on your account. She thinks you have robbed her of Lord Falbridge's affections, and that is the occasion of her honouring me with her company.

Amel. Lord Falbridge's affections!

Mrs. G. Ah! my dear Amelia, you don't know your power over his heart. You have reconcil'd it
to

PROLOGUE.

Spoken by Mr. KING.

*EACH year how many English visit France,
To learn their language, or to learn to dance !
'Twixt Dover-Cliffs and Calais, in July,
Observe how thick the birds of passage fly !
Fair-Weather Fops in swarms, fresh-water Sailors,
Cooks, Mantua-makers, Milleners, and Tailors.
Our Bard too made a trip; and, stand'ers say,
Brought home among some more Run-Goods, a Play :
Here, on this quay, prepar'd t' unlade his cargo,
If on the Freight you lay not an Embargo.*

*'What! am I branded for a smuggler?' cries
Our little Bayes, with anger in his eyes.*

'No. English Poets, English Merchants made,

'To the whole World of Letters fairly trade :

'With the rich stores of ancient Rome and Greece,

'Imported Duty-free, may fill their Piece :

'Or, like Columbus, cross th' Atlantick Ocean,

'And set Peru and Mexico in motion ;

'Turn Cherokees and Catabaws to shape ;

'Or sail for Wit and Humour to the Cape.'

Is there a Weaver here from Spital-fields ?

To his award our Author fairly yields.

The Pattern, he allows, is not quite new,

And he imports the raw Materials too.

Come whence they will, from Lyons, Genoa, Rome,

'Tis English Silk when wrought in English Loom.

Silk! he recants; and owns with lowly mind,

His manufacture is a coarser kind.

Be it Drab, Drugget, Flannel, Doyley, Frieze,

Rug, or whatever Winter-wear you please,

So it have leave to rank in any Class,

Pronounce it English Stuff, and let it pass.

Dramatis Personæ.

<i>Lord Falbridge,</i>	<i>Mr. POWELL.</i>
<i>Sir William Douglas,</i>	<i>Mr. HAVARD.</i>
<i>Freeport,</i>	<i>Mr. YATES.</i>
<i>Spatter,</i>	<i>Mr. KING.</i>
<i>Owen,</i>	<i>Mr. BURTON.</i>
<i>La France,</i>	<i>Mr. BADDELEY.</i>
<i>Officer,</i>	<i>Mr. STRANGE.</i>
<i>Servants, &c.</i>	

<i>Lady Alton,</i>	<i>Mrs. ABINGTON.</i>
<i>Amelia,</i>	<i>Mrs. PALMER.</i>
<i>Mrs. Goodman,</i>	<i>Mrs. HOPKINS.</i>
<i>Molly,</i>	<i>Miss POPE.</i>

Scene, LONDON.

to virtue.—But come! let me prevail on you to come with me to dinner.

Amel. You must excuse me.

Mrs. G. Well, well, then I'll send you something to your own apartment. If you have any other commands, pray honour me with them, for I would fain oblige you, if I knew how it were in my power. *(Exit.*

Manent Amelia and Molly.

Amel. What an amiable woman! If it had not been for her apparent benevolence and goodness of heart, I should have left the house on Mr. Spatter's coming to lodge in it.

Mol. Lady Alton, it seems, recommended him as a lodger here; so he can be no friend of yours on that account; for to be sure she owes you no good will on account of my lord Falbridge.

Amel. No more of Lord Falbridge, I beseech you Molly. How can you persist in mentioning him, when you know that, presuming on my situation, he has dared to affront me with dishonourable proposals?

Mol. Ah, madam, but he sorely repents it, I promise you, and would give his whole estate for an opportunity of seeing you once more, and getting into your good graces again.

Amel. No; his ungenerous conduct has thrown him as much below me, as my condition had placed me beneath him. He imagined he had a right to insult my distress; but I will teach him to think it respectable. *(Exeunt.*

C

ACT



A C T II.

SCENE, *An apartment at Mrs. Goodman's.*

Enter Lady Alton and Spatter.

Spat. **B**UT you won't hear me, Madam!

L. Alt. I have heard too much, Sir! This wandering *incognita* a woman of virtue! I have no patience.

Spat. Mrs. Goodman pretends to be convinced of her being a person of honour.

L. Alt. A person of honour, and openly receive visits from men! seduce Lord Falbridge! No, no; reserve this character for your next novel, Mr. Spatter! it is an affront to my understanding. I begin to suspect you have betrayed me; you have gone over to the adverse party, and are in the conspiracy to abuse me.

Spat. I, madam! Neither her beauty, nor her virtue—

L. Alt. Her beauty! her virtue! Why, thou wretch, thou grub of literature, whom I as a patroness of learning and encourager of men of letters, willing to blow the dead coal of genius, fondly took under my protection, do you remember what I have done for you?

Spat. With the utmost gratitude, Madam.

L. Alt. Did not I draw you out of the garret, where you daily spun out your flimsy brain to catch the town flies in your cobweb dissertations? Did not I introduce you to Lord Dapperwit, the Apollo of the age? And did not you dedicate your silly volume of poems on several occasions to him? Did not I put you into the list of my visitors, and order my porter to admit you at dinner time? Did not I write the only scene in your execrable farce, which the audience vouchsafed

vouchsafed an hearing? And did not my female friend, Mrs. Melpomene, furnish you with Greek and Latin mottoes for your twopenny essays?

Spat. I acknowledge all your Ladyship's goodness to me. I have done every thing in my power to shew my gratitude, and fulfil your Ladyship's commands.

L. Alt. Words, words, Mr. Spatter! You have been witness of Lord Falbridge's inconstancy. A perfidious man! False as Phaon to Sappho, or Jason to Medea! You have seen him desert me for a wretched vagabond; you have seen me abandoned like Calypso, without making a single effort to recal my faithless Ulysses from the Siren that has lured him from me.

Spat. Be calm but one moment, Madam, and I'll—

L. Alt. Bid the sea be calm, when the winds are let loose upon it. I have reason to be enraged. I placed you in genteel apartments in this house, merely to plant you as a spy; and what have you done for me? Have you employed your correspondence to any purpose? or discovered the real character of this infamous woman, this insolent Amelia?

Spat. I have taken every possible method to detect her. I have watched Amelia herself like a bailiff, or a Duena; I have overheard private conversations; have sounded the landlady; tampered with the servants; opened letters; and intercepted messages.

L. Alt. Good creature! my best Spatter! And what? what have you discovered?

Spat. That Amelia is a native of Scotland; that her surname *Walton* is probably not real, but assumed; and that she earnestly wishes to conceal both the place of her birth and her family.

L. Alt. And is that all?

Spat. All that I have been able to learn as yet, Madam.

L. Alt. Wretch! of what service have you been then? Are these your boasted talents? When we want to unravel an ambiguous character, you have made out that she wishes to lie concealed; and when we wish

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to know who she is, you have just discovered that she is a native of Scotland.

Spat. And yet if you will give me leave, Madam, I think I could convince you that these discoveries, blind and unsatisfactory as they may appear to you at first, are of no small consequence.

L. Alt. Of what consequence can they possibly be to me, man?

Spat. I'll tell you, Madam. It is a rule in politicks, when we discover something, to add something more. Something, added to something, makes a good deal; upon this basis I have formed a syllogism.

L. Alt. What does the pedant mean? A syllogism!

Spat. Yes, a syllogism: as for example; Any person who is a native of Scotland, and wishes to be concealed, must be an enemy to the government. Amelia is a native of Scotland, and wishes to be concealed. *Ergo*, Amelia is an enemy to the government.

L. Alt. Excellent! admirable logick! but I wish we could prove it to be truth.

Spat. I would not lay a wager of the truth of it; but I would swear it.

L. Alt. What on a proper occasion; and in a proper place, my good Spatter?

Spat. Willingly; we must make use of what we know, and even of what we don't know. Truth is of a dry and simple nature, and stands in need of some little ornament. A lie, indeed, is infamous; but fiction, your Ladyship, who deals in poetry, knows is beautiful.

L. Alt. But the substance of your fiction, Spatter?

Spat. I will lodge an information that the father of Amelia is a disaffected person, and has sent her to London for treasonable purposes: nay, I can upon occasion even suppose the father himself to be in London: in consequence of which you will probably recover Lord Falbridge, and Amelia will be committed to prison.

L. Alt. You have given me new life. I took you for a mere flatterer of paper; but I have found you a Machiavel.—I hear somebody coming.—Mrs. Goodman has

has undertaken to send Amelia hither. Ha ! she's here.—Away Spatter, and wait for me at my house : you must dine with me ; and after dinner, like true politicians, we will settle our plan of operations over our coffee. Away, away this instant ! (*Exit Spatter.*)

Lady Alton alone.

A convenient engine this Mr. Spatter : the most impudent thorough-paced knave in the three kingdoms ! with the heart of Zoilus, the pen of Mævius, and the tongue of Thersites. I was sure he would stick at nothing. The writings of authors are publick advertisements of their qualifications ; and when they profess to live upon scandal, it is as much as to say, that they are ready for every other dirty work, in which we chuse to employ them.—But now for Amelia : if she proves tractable, I may forego the use of this villain, who almost makes me hate my triumph, and be ashamed of my revenge.

Enter Amelia.

Amel. Mrs. Goodman has informed me that your Ladyship has desired to see me : I wait your commands, Madam.

L. Alt. Look you, young woman : I am sensible how much it is beneath a person of my rank to parley with one of your condition. For once, however, I am content to wave all ceremony ; and if you behave as you ought to do, you have nothing to fear, child.

Amel. I hope I have never behaved otherwise than as I ought to do, Madam.

L. Alt. Yes ; you have received the visits of Lord Falbridge ; you have endeavoured to estrange his affections from me : but, if you encourage him in his infidelity to me, tremble for the consequence : be advised, or you are ruined.

Amel. I am conscious of no guilt, and know no fear, Madam.

L. Alt. Come, come, Mrs. Amelia ; this high strain is out of character with me. Adieu over your

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Clelia, and Cleopatra, and Cassandra, at a proper time ; and let me talk in the stile of nature and common sense to you. You have no Lord Falbridge, no weak young nobleman to impose upon at present.

Amel. To impose upon ! I scorn the imputation, and am sorry to find that your Ladyship came hither, merely to indulge yourself in the cruel pleasure of insulting one of the unhappiest of her sex. [*weeping.*]

L. Alt. You are mistaken ; I came hither to concert measures for your happiness, to assist your poverty, and relieve your distress. Leave this house ; leave London ; I will provide you a retirement in the country, and supply all your wants. Only renounce all thoughts of Lord Falbridge, and never let him know the place of your retreat.

Amel. Lord Falbridge ! What is Lord Falbridge to me, Madam ?

L. Alt. To convince me you have no commerce with him, accept of my proposals.

Amel. No, Madam ; the favours which you intend me, I could not receive without blushing. I have no wants but what I can supply myself ; no distresses which your Ladyship can relieve ; and I will seek no refuge but in my own virtue.

L. Alt. Your virtue ! Ridiculous ! If you are a woman of virtue, what is the meaning of all this mystery ? Who are you ? What are you ? Who will vouch for your character ?

Amel. It wants no vouchers ; nor will I suffer myself to be arraigned like a criminal, till I know by what authority you take upon you to act as my judge.

L. Alt. Matchless confidence ! Yes, yes, it is too plain ; I see you are the very creature I took you for ; a mere adventurer : some strolling princess, that are perhaps more frugal of your favours than the rest of your sisterhood, merely to enhance the price of them.

Amel. Hold, Madam ! This opprobrious language is more injurious to your own honour than to mine. I see the violence of your temper, and will leave you. But you may one day know that my birth is equal to your own ; my heart is perhaps
more

more generous ; and whatever may be my situation, I scorn to be dependant on any body ; much less on one, who has so mean an opinion of me, and who considers me as her rival. *[Exit.]*

Lady Alton alone.

Her rival ! Unparalleled insolence ! An open avowal of her competition with me ! Yes ; I see Spatter must be employed. Her rival ! I shall burst with indignation.

Enter Mrs. Goodman.

L. Alt. Mrs. Goodman ! where is Mr. Spatter ?

Mrs. G. He went out the moment he left your Ladyship. But you seem disordered ; shall I get you some hartshorn, Madam ?

L. Alt. Some poison.—Rival ! I shall choak with rage,—You shall hear from me. You, and your Amelia, You have abused me ; you have conspired against my peace ; and be assured you shall suffer for it. *[Exit.]*

Mrs. Goodman alone.

What a violent woman ! Her passion makes her forget what is due to her sex and quality. Ha ! Mr. Freeport !

Enter Freeport.

My best friend ! Welcome to London ! When did you arrive from Lisbon ?

Free. But last night,

Mrs. G. I hope you have had a pleasant voyage ?

Free. A good trading voyage—I have got money, but I have got the spleen too.—Have you any news in town ?

Mrs. G. None at all, Sir.

Free.

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Free. So much the better. The less news, the less nonsense.—But what strange lady have you had here ? I met her as I was coming up : she rushed by like a fury, and almost swept me down stairs again with the wind of her hoop-petticoat.

Mrs. G. Ah ! Jealousy ! Jealousy is a terrible passion ; especially in a woman's breast, Mr. Freeport.

Free. Jealousy ! Why, she is not jealous of you, Mrs. Goodman ?

Mrs. G. No ; but of a lodger of mine.

Free. Have you any new lodgers since I left you ?

Mrs. G. Two or three, Sir ; the last arrived but to-day ; an elderly gentleman, who will see no company.

Free. He's in the right. Three parts in four of mankind are knaves, or fools ; and the fourth part live by themselves.—But who are your other lodgers ?

Mrs. G. An author and a lady.

Free. I hate authors. Who is the lady ?

Mrs. G. She calls herself Amelia Walton ; but I believe that name is not her real one.

Free. Not her real one ! Why sure she is a woman of character ?

Mrs. G. A woman of character ! She is an angel. She is most miserably poor ; and yet haughty to an excess.

Free. Pride and poverty ! A sad composition, Mrs. Goodman.

Mrs. G. No, Sir ; her pride is one of her greatest virtues : it consists in depriving herself of almost all necessaries, and concealing it from the world. Tho' every action speaks her to be a woman of birth and education, she lives upon the work of her own hands, without murmur or complaint. I make use of a thousand stratagems to assist her against her will ; I prevail on her to keep the money, due for rent, for her support, and furnish her with every thing she wants at half its prime cost ; but if she perceives or suspects these little artifices, she takes it almost as ill as if I had attempted to defraud her. In short, Sir, her unshaken virtue
and

and greatness of soul under misfortunes, make me consider her as a prodigy, and often draw tears of pity and admiration from me.

Free. Ah ! women's tears lie very near their eyes. I never cried in my life ; and yet I can feel too ; I can admire, I can esteem ; but what signifies whimpering ? Hark ye, Mrs. Goodman ! This is a very extraordinary account you give of this young woman ; you have raised my curiosity, and I'll go and see this Lodger of yours ; I am rather out of spirits, and it will serve to amuse me

Mrs. G. Oh, Sir, you can't see her ; she neither pays visits nor receives them, but lives in the most retired manner in the world.

Free. So much the better. I love retirement as well as she. Where are her apartments ?

Mrs. G. On this very floor, on the other side of the stair-case.

Free. I'll go and see her immediately.

Mrs. G. Indeed you can't, Sir. It is impossible.

Free. Impossible ! where is the impossibility of going into a room ? Come along !

Mrs. G. For heaven's sake, Mr. Freeport !

Free. P'shaw ! I have no time to lose, I have business half an hour hence.

Mrs. G. But won't it be rather indelicate, Sir ? Let me prepare her first !

Free. Prepare her—With all my heart—But remember that I am a man of business, Mrs. Goodman, and have no time to waste in ceremony and compliment. [Exit.

Amelia's apartment.

Amelia at work, and Molly.

Amel. No, Polly ! If Lord Falbridge comes again, I am resolved not to see him.

Molly. Indeed, Madam, he loves you above all the world ; I am sure of it ; and I verily believe he will run mad, if you don't hear what he has to say for himself.

Amel.

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Amel. Speak no more of him.

Enter Mrs. Goodman.

Mrs. Goodman !

Mrs. G. Pardon me, Madam ! Here is a gentleman of my acquaintance begs you would give him leave to speak with you.

Amel. A gentleman ! who is he ?

Mrs. G. His name is Freeport, Madam. He has a few particularities ; but he is the best-hearted man in the world. Pray let him come in, Madam !

Amel. By no means ; you know I receive visits from nobody.

Enter Freeport.

Bless me ! he's here. This is very extraordinary indeed, Mrs Goodman.

Free. Don't disturb yourself, young woman ; don't disturb yourself !

Molly. Mighty free and easy, methinks !

Amel. Excuse me, Sir ; I am not used to receive visits from persons entirely unknown.

Free. Unknown ! There is not a man in all London better known than I am. I am a merchant, my name is Freeport ; Freeport of Crutched Friars, enquire upon 'Change !

Amel. Mrs. Goodman ! I never saw the gentleman before. I am surprised at his coming here.

Free. Pooh ! Prithee ; Mrs Goodman knows me well enough. [*Mrs. Goodman talks apart with Amelia.*] Ay ! that's right, Mrs. Goodman. Let her know who I am, and tell her to make herself easy.

Mrs. G. But the lady does not chuse we should trouble her, Sir.

Free. Trouble her ! I'll give her no trouble ; I came to drink a dish of tea with you ; let your maid get it ready, and we will have it here instead of your parlour.—In the mean time I will talk with this lady ; I have something to say to her.

Amel.

Amel. If you had any business, Sir—

Free. Business! I tell you I have very particular business; so sit down, and let's have the tea.

Mrs. G. You should not have followed me so soon, Sir.

Free. Pooh, prithee! [*Exit Mrs. Goodman.*]

Molly. This the oddest man I ever saw in my life.

Amel. Well, Sir, as I see you are a particular acquaintance of Mrs. Goodman—But pray what are your commands for me, Sir? [*They sit*]

Free. I tell you what, young woman; I am a plain man, and will tell you my mind in an instant. I am told that you are one of the best women in the world, very virtuous, and very poor; I like you for that: but they say you are excessively proud too; now I don't like you for that, Madam.

Moll. Free and easy still, I see.

Amel. And pray, Sir, who told you so?

Free. Mrs. Goodman.

Amel. She has deceived you, Sir; not in regard to my pride, perhaps, for there is a certain right pride which every body, especially women, ought to possess; and as to virtue, it is no more than my duty; but as to poverty I disclaim it; they who want nothing, cannot be said to be poor.

Free. It is no such thing; you don't speak the truth; and that is worse than being proud. I know very well that you are as poor as Job, that you are in want of common necessaries, and don't make a good meal above once in a fortnight.

Moll. My mistress fasts for her health, Sir.

Free. Hold your tongue huffy! what, are you proud too?

Moll. Lord, what a strange man!

Free. But however, Madam, proud or not proud, does not signify two pence.—Hark ye, young woman! it is a rule with me (as it ought to be with every good Christian) to give a tenth part of my fortune in charity. In the account of my profits there stands at present the sum of two thousand pounds on the credit

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dit side of my books ; so that I am two hundred pounds in arrear. This I look upon as a debt due from my fortune to your poverty — Yes, your poverty I say, so never deny it. There's a bank-note for two hundred pounds ; and now I am out of your debt. — Where the deuce is this tea, I wonder ?

Mol. I never saw such a man in my life.

Amel. I don't know that I ever was so thoroughly confounded [*apart.*] — Sir !

[*to Freeport.*

Free. Well ?

Amel. This noble action has surpris'd me still more than your conversation, but you must excuse my refusal of your kindness ; for I must confess, that if I were to accept what you offer, I don't know when I should be able to restore it.

Free. Restore it ! why who wants you to restore it ? I never dreamt of restitution.

Amel. I feel, I feel your goodness to the bottom of my soul ; but you must excuse me. I have no occasion for your bounty ; take your note, Sir, and bestow it where it is wanted.

Moll. Lord, Madam ! you are ten times stranger than the gentleman. — I tell you what, Sir ; [*to Freeport*] it does not signify talking ; we are in the greatest distress in the world, and if it had not been for the kindness and good nature of Mrs. Goodman, we might have died by this time. My lady has concealed her distress from every body that was willing and able to relieve her ; you have come to the knowledge of it in spite of her teeth ; and I hope that you will oblige her, in spite of her teeth, to accept of your generous offer.

Amel. No more, my dear Polly ; if you would not have me die with shame, say no more ! Return the gentleman his note with my best thanks for his kindness ; tell him, I durst not accept of it ; for when a woman receives presents from a man, the world will always suspect that she pays for them at the expence of her virtue.

Free. What's that ! what does she say, child ?

Free.

Moll. Lord, Sir, I hardly know what she says. She says, that when a gentleman makes a young lady presents, he is always supposed to have a design upon her virtue.

Free. Nonlense! why should she suspect me of an ungenerous design, because I do a generous action?

Moll. Do you hear Madam?

Amel. Yes, I hear; I admire; but I must persist in my refusal: if that scandalous fellow Spatter were to hear of this, he would stick at saying nothing.

Free. Eh! what's that?

Moll. She is afraid you should be taken for her lover, Sir.

Free. I for your lover! not I. I never saw you before. I don't love you; so make no scruples upon that account; I like you well enough, but I don't love you at all; not at all, I tell you.—If you have a mind never to see my face any more, good bye t'ye!—You shall never see me any more, If you like I should come back again, I'll come back again;—but I lose time, I have business; your servant!

[Going,

Amel. Stay, Sir! do not leave me without receiving the sincerest acknowledgements of my gratitude and esteem; but, above all, receive your note again, and do not put me any longer to the blush!

Free. The woman is a fool.

Enter Mrs. Goodman.

Amel. Come hither, I beseech you, Mrs. Goodman.

Mrs. G. Your pleasure, Madam?

Amel. Here! take this note which that gentleman has given me by mistake; return it to him, I charge you; assure him of my esteem and admiration; but let him know I need no assistance, and cannot accept it.

[Exit.

Manent Freeport, &c.

Mrs. G. Ah! Mr. Freeport! you have been at your

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old trade. You are always endeavouring to do good actions in secret ; but the world always finds you out you see.

Mol. Well ; I don't believe there are two stranger people in England than my mistress, and that gentleman ; one so ready to part with money ; and the other so unwilling to receive it ;—but don't believe her Sir, for, between friends, she is in very great need of assistance I assure you.

Mrs. G. Indeed I believe so.

Free. Oh, I have no doubt on't ; so I'll tell you what, Mrs. Goodman ; keep the note, and supply her wants out of it without her knowledge ; and now I think of it, that way is better than t'other.

Mol. I never saw such a strange man in my life.

[*Exit.*

Mrs. G. I shall obey your kind commands, Sir ; poor soul ! my heart bleeds for her ; her virtue and misfortunes touch me to the soul.

Free. I have some little feeling for her too ; but she is too proud. A fine face ; fine figure ; well behaved ; well bred ; and I dare say an excellent heart ;—But she is too proud ; tell her so, d'ye hear ? tell her she is too proud. I shall be too late for my business—I'll see her again soon—It is a pity she is so proud.

[*Exeunt.*

A C T



A C T III.

S C E N E, *A Hall.*

Sir William Douglas alone.

A Young woman! a native of Scotland! her name Amelia! supposed to be in the greatest distress, and living in total retirement! If fortune should for once smile upon me, and have thrown me into the very same house! I don't know what to think of it; and yet so many uncommon circumstances together recal the memory of my misfortunes, and awaken all the father in my bosom.—I must be satisfied.

Enter Molly crossing the stage.

Sir W. Madam! will you permit me to speak one word to you.

Mol. [*coming forward.*] If you please; what is your pleasure, Sir?

Sir W. I presume, Madam, you are the charming young woman I have heard of!

Mol. I have a few charms in the eyes of some folks to be sure, Sir.

Sir W. And you are a native of Scotland, they tell me?

Mol. I am; at your service, Sir.

Sir W. Will you give me leave to ask the name of your family? Who is your father?

Mol. I really don't remember my father.

Sir W. Ha! not remember him, do you say?

[*Earnestly.*]

Mol. No, Sir; but I have been told that he was—

Sir W. Who, Madam?

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Mol. One of the most eminent bakers in Aberdeen, Sir.

Sir W. Oh, I conceive ! you live, I suppose, with the young lady I meant to speak to. I mistook you for the lady herself.

Mol. You did me a great deal of honour, I assure you, Sir

Sir W. But you are acquainted with your mistress's family ?

Mol. Family, Sir !

Sir W. Ay ; who are her parents ?

Mol. She comes of very creditable parents, I promise you, Sir.

Sir W. I don't doubt it ; but who are they ? I have particular reasons for enquiring.

Mol. Very likely so ; but I must beg to be excused, Sir.

Sir W. Of what age is your mistress ? you will tell me that at least.

Mol. Oh, as to her age, she don't care who knows that ; she is too young to deny her age yet a while. She is about one-and-twenty, Sir.

Sir W. Precisely the age of my Amelia. [*apart.*] One and-twenty, you say ? [*To Molly.*]

Mol. Yes, Sir ; and I am about two-and-twenty ; there is no great difference between us.

Sir W. [*apart.*] It must be so ; her age, her country, her manner of living, all concur to prove her mine ; my dear child, whom I left to taste of misfortune from her cradle.

Mol. [*apart.*] What is he muttering, I wonder ; I wish this one-and-twenty has not turned the old gentleman's head.

Sir W. Let me beg the favour of you to conduct me to your mistress : I want to speak with her.

Mol. She will see no company, Sir ; she is indisposed ; she is in great affliction ; and receives no visits at all.

Sir W. Mine is not a visit of form or ceremony, or even impertinent curiosity ; but on the most urgent business. Tell her I am her fellow-countryman.

Mol.

Mol. What ! are you of Scotland too, Sir ?

Sir W. I am. Tell her I take part in her afflictions, and may, perhaps, bring her some consolation.

Mol. There is something mighty particular about this old gentleman ! he has not brought another two hundred pounds sure ! [*apart.*] Well, Sir ; since you are so very pressing, since you say you are our fellow-countryman, if you will walk this way, I'll speak to my mistress, and see what I can do for you.

Sir W. I am obliged to you. [*Exit Molly.*] And now, if I may trust the forebodings of an old fond heart, I am going to throw my arms about my daughter. [*Exit.*]

[*As Sir William follows Molly out on one side, Spatter appears on the other.*]

Spatter alone.

There they go ; what the deuce can that old fellow and Amelia's maid do together ? The slut is certainly conducting him to her mistress ! In less than half an hour I expect that Amelia will be apprehended. In the mean time I must be upon the watch ; for since I have laid the information, it is high time that I should collect some materials to support it.—Who comes here ? Lord Falbridge's valet de chambre : his errand is to Amelia, without doubt ; something may be learnt there, perhaps.

Enter La France.

Ha ! Monsieur La France ! your servant.

La Fr. Serviteur ! ver glad to see you, Monsieur Spatter.

Spat. Well ; what brings you here ? eh, Monsieur La France ?

La Fr. Von lettre, Monsieur.

Spat. A letter to whom ?

La Fr. From my Lor to Mademoiselle Amelie.

Spat. Oh, you're mistaken, Monsieur ; that letter is for Lady Alton.

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La Fr. Lady Alton! no, *ma foi!* it be for Mademoiselle. I am no mistake. *Je ne me trompe pas la dessus.*

Spat. Why, have not you carried several letters from Lord Falbridge to Lady Alton.

La Fr. Oh, *que oui!* but dis be for de young laty dat lif here; for Mademoiselle: my Lor lov her! *ma foi*; he lov her *à la folie*.

Spat. And he loved Lady Alton *à la folie*, did not he?

La Fr. Oh, *que non!* he lov her so gently! *si tranquillement*; *ma foi*, he lov her *à la Francoise*.— But now he lov Mademoiselle; he no eat, no sleep, no speak, but Mademoiselle; no tink but of Mademoiselle; quite an oder ting, Monsieur Spatter, quite an oder ting!

Spat. Well, well; no matter for that; the letter is for Lady Alton, I promise you.

La Fr. Ah! *pardonnez moi?*

Spat. It is, I assure you; and to convince you of it, see here, Monsieur! Lady Alton has sent you five guineas to pay the postage.

La Fr. Five guinees! *ma foi*, I believe I was mistake, indeed.

Spat. Ay, ay; I told you you were mistaken: and after all, if it should not be for her Ladyship, she will inclose it in another case, and send it to Amelia, and nobody will be the wiser.

La Fr. *Fort bien*; ver well; *la voila.* (*gives the letter.*) I have got five guinees; I don't care.

Spat. Why should you? Where's the harm, if one woman should receive a letter written to another? There will be nothing lost by it; for if Amelia don't receive this, she will receive others; and letters of this sort are all alike, you know.

La Fo. Begar dat is ver true. Adieu, Sir,—I have execute my commission; *adieu.* *Ob! je fais bien mes commissions, moi!* [Exit.

Spatter

Spatter alone.

See the effects of secret-service money ! Intelligence must be paid for ; and the bribing couriers is a fair stratagem, by all the laws of war. Shall I break open this letter ; or carry it to Lady Alton as it is ? No ; I'll read it myself, that I may have the credit of communicating the contents. Let me see ! (*opens the letter and reads.*) " Thou dearest, most respectable, and most virtuous of women ! " So ! this is *à la folie*, indeed, as Monsieur La France calls it. — " If any consideration could add to my remorse, for the injury I have offered you, it would be the discovery of your real character. " Ah, ah ! " I know who you are. I know you are the daughter of the unhappy Sir William Douglas. " — So, so ! — " Judge then of the tumult of my soul ; which is only preserved from the horrors of despair, by the hopes of rendering some service to the father, which may, perhaps, in some measure atone for my behaviour to his too justly offended daughter. Give me leave, this evening, to sue for my pardon at your feet, and to inform you of the measures I have taken. In the mean time believe me unalterably yours.

" Falbridge."

This is a precious paquet, indeed. — Now if I could discover the father too ! — His Lordship's visit will be too late in the evening, I fancy ; the lady will not be at home ; but before she goes once more to my old trade of eaves-dropping about her apartments ! The old gentleman and she are certainly together, and their conversation perhaps may be curious. At all events, Lady Alton must be gratified. Men of letters never get any thing of their patrons, but by sacrificing to their foibles. (*Exit.*)

Amelia's

*Amelia's apartment.**Sir William Douglas and Amelia discovered sitting.*

Sir W. Every word you utter, touches me to the soul. Nothing but such noble sentiments could have supported your spirit under so many misfortunes.

Amel. Perhaps it is to my misfortunes that I owe those sentiments; had I been brought up in ease and luxury, my mind, which has learnt fortitude from distress, might have been enfeebled by prosperity.

Sir W. Thou most amiable of thy sex, I conjure thee to hide nothing from me. You say you were born at Aberdeen; you confess that you are derived from one of those unhappy families, who suffered themselves to be so fatally deluded, and drawn from their allegiance to the best of kings. Why, why then, will you not tell me all? Why do you endeavour to conceal your name and family?

Amel. My duty to my family obliges me to silence. My father's life is forfeited by the sentence of the law; and he owes his existence at this hour to flight or secrecy. He may be in England; he may, for aught I know, be in London; and the divulging my name and family might create a fresh search after him, and expose him to new perils. Your conversation, it is true, has inspired me with respect and tenderness; but yet you are a stranger to me: I have reason to fear every thing, and one word may undo me.

Sir W. Alas! one word may make us both happy. Tell me; of what age were you when your cruel fortune separated you from your father?

Amel. An infant; so young, that I have not the least traces of him in my memory.

Sir W. And your mother; what became of her?

Amel. She, as I have often heard, was carried off by a fever, while she was preparing to embark with me, to follow the fortunes of my father. He, driven almost to despair by this last stroke of ill fortune, continually shifted his place of residence abroad; but

but for some years past, whether by his death, the miscarriage of letters, the infidelity of friends, or other accidents, I have not received the least intelligence of him; and now I almost begin to despair of hearing of him again, tho' I still persist in my enquiries.

Sir W. [rising.] It must be so; It is as I imagined. All these touching circumstances are melancholy witnessses of the truth of it. Yes, my child! I am that unhappy father, whom you lost so early; I am that unfortunate husband, whom death and my unhappy fate, almost at the very same period, divorced from the best of wives; I am—I am Sir William Douglas.

Amel. Sir William Douglas! have I lived to see my father! then heaven has heard my prayers; this is the first happy moment of my unfortunate life [*embracing.*]—And yet your presence here fills me with apprehensions; I tremble for your safety, for your life; how durst you venture your person in this kingdom? how can you expose yourself to the danger of discovery in this town? My whole soul is in a tumult of fear and joy.

Sir W. Do not be alarmed, my Amelia; fear nothing; heaven begins to smile upon my fortune. To find thee so unexpectedly, to find thee with a mind so superior to distress, softens the anguish of my past life, and gives me happy omens of the future.

Amel. Oh, Sir! by the joy I receive from the embraces of a father, let me conjure you to provide for your safety! do not expose me to the horror of losing you again; of losing you for ever! Quit this town immediately; every moment that you remain in it, is at the hazard of your life; I am ready to accompany you to any part of the world.

Sir W. My dear child! how I grieve that your youth and virtue should be involved in my misfortunes! Yes, we will quit this kingdom; prepare, for your departure, and we may leave London this evening.

Enter

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Enter Owen hastily.

Ha! Owen! thou art come at a happy moment. I have found my daughter. This is your young mistress, the paragon of her sex, my dear, my amiable Amelia.

Owen. Oh, Sir, this is no time for congratulation. You are in the most imminent danger.

Sir W. What is the matter?

Owen. The officers of government are at this instant in the house. I saw them enter; I heard them say they had authority to apprehend some suspected person, and I ran immediately to inform you of your danger.

Amel. Oh, heaven! my father, what will you do?

Owen. Don't be alarmed, Sir; we are two; we are armed; and we may perhaps be able to make our way through them; I will stand by you the last drop of my blood.

Sir W. Thou faithful creature! Stay Owen; our fears may betray us; till we are sure we are attacked, let us shew no signs of opposition!

Enter Molly, hastily.

Mol. My dear mistress! we are ruined; we are undone for ever.

Amel. There are officers of justice in the house? I have heard it; tell me, tell me this instant whom do they seek for?

Mol. For you Madam; for you; they have a warrant to apprehend you, they say.

Amel. But they have no warrant to apprehend any body else?

Mol. No, Madam; nobody else; but I will follow you to the end of the world.

Amel. My dear Polly, I did not mean *you*: retire Sir; [*to Sir William.*] For heaven's sake leave me to their mercy; they can have no facts against me; my life
has

has been as innocent as unfortunate, and I must soon be released.

Sir W. No, my child ; I will not leave thee.

Mol. My child ? This is Sir William Douglas then, as sure as I am alive !

Sir W. Besides, retiring at such a time might create suspicion, and incur the danger we would wish to avoid.

Mol. They will be in the room in a moment ; I think I hear them upon the stairs. they would have been here before me, if Mr. Freeport had not come in and stopt them.

Sir W. Courage, my dear Amelia !

Amel. Alas Sir ! I have no terrors but for you.

Owen. They are here, Sir.

Mol. Oh, lord ! here they are indeed ; I am frightened out of my wits.

Enter Mrs. Goodman, Freeport, and Officer.

Free. A warrant to seize her ; a harmless young woman ! it is impossible.

Officer. Pardon me, Sir ; if the young lady goes by the name of Amelia Walton, I have a warrant to apprehend her.

Free. On what account ?

Officer. As a dangerous person.

Free. Dangerous !

Officer. Yes, Sir ; suspected of disaffection and treasonable practices.

Amel. I am the unhappy object of your search, Sir ; give me leave to know the substance of the accusation.

Officer. I cannot tell you particulars, Madam ; but information upon oath has been made against you, and I am ordered to apprehend you.

Mrs. G. But you will accept of bail, Sir ; I will be bound for all I am worth in the world.

Officer. In these cases, Madam, bail is not usual ; and if ever accepted at all, it is excessively high ; and given by persons of very large property, and known character.

Free

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Free. Well ; my property is large enough and my character very well known. My name is Freeport.

Officer. I know you very well, Sir.

Free. I'll answer for her appearance ; I'll be bound in a penalty of five hundred pounds, a thousand, two thousand, or what sum you please.

Officer. And will you enter into the recognisance immediately.

Free. With all my heart, come along ! [going.

Officer. And are you in earnest, Sir ?

Free. Ay, to be sure. Why not ?

Officer. Because, Sir, I'll venture to say there are but few people that place their money on such securities.

Free. So much the worse ; he who can employ it in doing good, places it on the best security, and puts it out at the highest interest in the world.

(Exit with the Officer.

Manent Sir William Douglas, &c.

Sir W. I can hardly trust my eyes and ears ; who is this benevolent gentleman ?

Mrs G. I don't wonder you are surpris'd at Mr. Freeport's manner of proceeding, Sir ; but it is his way. He is not a man of compliment ; but he does the most essential service in less time, than others take in making protestations.

Mol. Here he is again ; heaven reward him !

Re-enter Freeport.

Free. So ! that matter is dispatched ; now to our other affairs ! this is a busy day with me. — Look-ye, Sir William ; we must be brief ; there is no time to be lost.

Sir W. How ! am I betrayed then !

Free. Betrayed ! no ; but you are discovered.

Owen. What ! my master discovered !

[offers to draw.

Free.

Free. [to Owen] Nay, never clap thy hand to thy sword, old trusty! your master is in danger, it is true; but not from me, I promise you. Go, and get him a post-chaise; and let him pack off this instant; that is the best way of shewing your attachment to him at present.—Twenty years, Sir William, have not made so great an alteration in you, but I knew you the moment I saw you.

Mrs G. Harbour no distrust of Mr. Freeport, Sir; he is one of the worthiest men living.

Amel. I know his worthiness. His behaviour to the officer but this moment, uncommonly generous as it appeared, is not the first testimony he has given me to day of his noble disposition.

Free. Noble! p'shaw! nonsense!

Sir W. [to Freeport] Sir; the kind manner in which you have been pleased to interest yourself in my affairs, has almost as much overpowered me, as if you had surpris'd me with hostile proceedings. Which way shall I thank you for your goodness to me and my Amelia?

Free. Don't thank me at all; when you are out of danger, perhaps I may make a proposal to you, that will not be disagreeable; at present think of nothing but your escape; for I should not be surpris'd, if they were very shortly to make you the same compliment, they have paid to Amelia: and in your case, which is really a serious one, they might not be in the humour to accept of my recognisance.

Mrs G. Mr. Freeport is in the right, Sir; every moment of delay is hazardous; let us prevail upon you to depart immediately! Amelia, being wholly innocent, cannot be long detained in custody; and, as soon as she is released, I will bring her to you, wherever you shall appoint.

Free. Ay, ay, you must be gone directly, Sir! and as you may want ready money upon the road, take my purse! [offering his purse.]

Sir W. No, thou truest friend, I have no need of it. With what wonderful goodness have you acted towards me and my unhappy family!

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Free. Wonderful! why wonderful? Would not you have done the same, if you had been in my place?

Sir W. I hope I should.

Free. Well then, where is the wonder of it? Come, come, let us see you make ready for your departure!

Sir W. Thou best of men!

Free. Best of men! Heaven forbid! I have done no more than my duty by you. I am a man myself; and am bound to be a friend to all mankind, you know.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT.



A C T IV.

SCENE, Spatter's apartment.

Lady Alton, with a letter in her hand, and Spatter.

L. Alt. **T**HANKS, my good Spatter, many thanks for this precious epistle! more precious at present than one of Ovid, Pliny, or Cicero. It is at once a billet-doux and a state paper; and serves at the same time to convict her of conspiring against me and the publick.

Spat. It is a valuable manuscript, to be sure, Madam; and yet that is but the least half of my discoveries, since I left your ladyship.

L. Alt. But is not this half, according to the Grecian axiom, more than the whole, Mr. Spatter?

Spat. When you know the whole, I believe you will think nor, Madam.

L. Alt. Out with it then! I am impatient to be mistress of it.

Spat. By intercepting this letter of Lord Falbridge's, your Ladyship sees that we have discovered Amelia to be the daughter of Sir William Douglas.

L. Alt. True.

Spat. But what would you say, Madam, if I had found out the father himself too?

L. Alt. Sir William Douglas!

Spat. Is now in this house, Madam.

L. Alt. Impossible!

Spat. Nothing more certain. He arrived this morning under a feigned name. I saw him conducted to Amelia's apartment. This raised my suspicion, and I planted myself at her door, with all the circumspection of a spy, and address of a chambermaid. There I

40 The ENGLISH MERCHANT,

overheard their mutual acknowledgements of each other ; and a curious interview it was. First they wept for grief ; and then they wept for joy ; and then they wept for grief again. Their tears, however, were soon interrupted by the arrival of the officer, whose purpose was partly defeated, as you have already heard, by the intervention of Freeport.

L. Alt. Yes, the brute ! but that delay was not half so unfortunate, as your discoveries have been happy, Spatter ; for my revenge shall now return upon them with redoubled fury.—Issue out upon them once more ; see what they are about ; and be sure to give me immediate notice if Lord Falbridge should come.

[*Going.*

Spat. Stay, Madam. After intercepting the letter, I sent for your Ladyship, that at so critical a juncture, you might be present on the spot : and if you go home again, we shall lose time, which perhaps may be precious, in running to and fro. Suppose you step into the study, till I return. You will find my own answer to my last pamphlet, and the two first sheets of the next month's Magazine to amuse you.

L. Alt. Planned like a wise general ! Do you then go, and *reconnoitre* the enemy, while I lie here in ambush to reinforce you as soon as there shall be occasion. Do but give the word, we'll make a vigorous sally, put their whole body to rout, and take Amelia and her father prisoners.

(*Exeunt severally.*

A Hall.

Freeport alone.

I don't know how it is ; but this Amelia here runs in my head strangely. Ever since I saw her, I think of nothing else. I am not in love with her.—In love with her ! that's nonsense. But I feel a kind of uneasiness, a sort of pain that—I don't know what to make of it.—I'll speak to her father about her.

Enter

Enter Owen.

Well, old true-penny ! Have you prepared every thing for Sir William's departure ?

Owen. We had need be going, indeed, Sir ; we are in continual danger while we stay here ; who d'ye think lodged the information against Madam Amelia ?

Free. Who ?

Owen. A person who lodges in this very house, it seems : one Mr. Spatter, Sir.

Free. Spatter ! how d'ye know ?

Owen. I had it from one of the officers who came to apprehend her.

Free. A dog ! I could find in my heart to cut off his ears with my own hands, and save him the disgrace of the pillory.

Owen. My poor master is always unfortunate. If Lord Brumpton had lived a week longer, Sir William might perhaps have been out of the reach of their malice.

Free. Lord Brumpton ?

Owen. Yes, Sir. He was soliciting my master's pardon ; but died before he had accomplished his benevolent intentions.

Free. Ha ! A thought strikes me [*apart.*] Hark ye, friend, [*to Owen*] does Sir William know the present Lord Brumpton ?

Owen. No, Sir. The late lord had no children, or near relations, living ; and indeed, he was the only surviving friend of my poor master in the kingdom.

Free. Is the chaise at the door ?

Owen. Not yet, Sir ; but I expect it every moment.

Free. Run to your master, and desire him not to go till I see him. Tell him I am going out upon his business, and will be back within this hour.

Owen. I will let him know immediately.—Ah, you're a true friend indeed, Sir. [*Shaking him earnestly by the hand.*]

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Free. Pooh ! prithee !

Owen. Ah ! Heaven preserve you !

[*Exit.*

Freeport alone.

Fare thee well, old honesty !—By the death of Lord Brumpton, without children or near relations living, as Owen says, the title and estate come to my old friend Jack Brumpton, of Leverpoole ; who is of a distant branch ; a fortieth cousin, for aught I know ; who has past his whole life in a counting-house ; and, who, a few years ago, no more dreamt of being a Lord, than Grand Signior, or Great Mogul. He has so good a heart, that I believe it is impossible even for a title to corrupt it. I know he is in town ; so I'll go to him immediately ; acquaint him with the obligation entailed on him, to be of service to Sir William ; and make him heir to the benevolence of his predecessor, as well as his wealth and dignity. [*going, stops.*] Who's here ! Mrs. Goodman and Spatter, as I live ! Oh the dog ! my blood rises at the villain. If I don't take care, I shall incur an action of battery for caning the rascal.

Enter Mrs. Goodman and Spatter.

Mrs. G. In short, Mr. Spatter, I must beg leave to give you warning, and desire that you would provide yourself with another lodging as soon as possible.

Spat. What now ? What the deuce is the matter with you, Mrs. Goodman ?

Mrs. G. I see now the meaning of Lady Alton's recommendation of such a lodger to my house, as well as of her visits to Amelia, and her frequent conferences with you, Sir.

Spat. The woman is certainly out of her senses.

Free. What has been laid to your charge is no joke, Sir.

Spat. What ! are you there to keep up her back-hand, Mr. Freeport ? What is all this ?

Free. You are found out to be a spy, Sir,

Mrs.

Mrs. G. A person who pries into the secrets of families, merely to betray them.

Free An informer.

Mrs. G. An eaves dropper.

Free. A liar.

Spat. Right-hand and left ! this is too much : what the plague is the matter with you both ?

Mrs. G. Did not you go and tell that Amelia was a native of Scotland ?

Spat. Well ; and where's the harm of being born in Scotland ?

Free. None ; except by your malicious interpretation, rascal ; by means of which you made it the ground of an information against her, and were the cause of her being apprehended.

Spat. And you were the cause of her being released ; every man in his way, Mr. Freeport !

Free: Look you, firrah ! you are one of those wretches who miscall themselves authors ; a fellow, whose heart, and tongue, and pen, are equally scandalous ; who try to insinuate yourself every where, to make mischief if there is none, and to increase it, if you find any.—But if you fetch and carry like a spaniel, you must be treated like one. I have observed that you are always loitering in the passages ; but if I catch you within the wind of a door again, I'll beat you till you are as black as your own ink, firrah. Now you know my mind.

[*Exit.*

Spat. Very civil and very polite, indeed, Mr. Freeport. Ha ! here comes my friend Lord Falbridge.

Mrs. G. Lord Falbridge your friend ! for shame, Mr. Spatter !

Enter Lord Falbridge hastily.

L. Fal. Mrs. Goodman, I rejoice to see you. Tell me how does my Amelia ? I have heard of her distress, and flew to her relief. Was she alarmed ? Was she terrified ?

Mrs. G. Not much, my Lord : she sustained the shock with the same constancy that she endures every other affliction,

L. Fal.

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L. Fal. I know her merit ; I am too well acquainted with her greatness of soul ; and hope it is not yet too late for me to do justice to her virtue—Go to her, my dear Mr. Goodman, and tell her, I beg to see her : I have something that concerns her very nearly to impart to her.

Mrs. G. I will, my lord. [Exit.

L. Fal. Oh, Mr. Spatter ! I did not see you. What have you got there, Sir ? [seeing a paper in his hand.

Spat. Proposals for a new work, my Lord ! May I beg the honour of your Lordship's name among my list of subscribers ?

L. Fal. With all my heart, Sir. I am already in your debt on another account. (pulling out his purse.

Spat. To me, my Lord ? You do me a great deal of honour ; I should be very proud to be of the least service to your Lordship.

L. Fal. You have been of great service to me already, Sir. It was you, I find, lodged the information against this young lady.

Spat. I did no more than my duty, my Lord.

L. Fal. Yes ; you did me a favour, Sir. I consider only the deed, and put the intention quite out of the question. You meant to do Amelia a prejudice, and you have done me a service : for by endeavouring to bring her into distress, you gave me an opportunity of shewing my eagerness to relieve her.—There, Sir ! there is for the good you have done, while you meant to make mischief. (giving him a few guineas.) But take this along with it ; if you ever presume to mention the name of Amelia any more, or give yourself the least concern about her, or her affairs, I'll—

Spat. I am obliged to your Lordship. [bowing

L. Fal. Be gone, Sir ; leave me.

Spat. Your most humble servant, my Lord !—
So ! I am abused by every body ; and yet I get money by every body.—egad, I believe I am a much cleverer fellow than I thought I was. [Exit.

Lord.

Lord Falbridge alone.

Alas! I am afraid that Amelia will not see me. What would I not suffer to repair the affront that I have offered her?

Enter Molly.

Ha! Polly! how much am I obliged to you for sending me notice of Amelia's distress?

Mol. Hush, my Lord! Speak lower, for heaven's sake! My mistress has so often forbid me to tell any thing about her, that I tremble still at the thoughts of the confidence I have put in you. I was bewitched, I think, to let you know who she was.

L. Fal. You were inspired, Polly; heaven inspired you to acquaint me with all her distresses, that I might recommend myself to her favour again, by my zeal to serve her, though against her will.

Mol. That was the reason I told you; for else I am sure I should die with grief to give her the least uneasiness.

L. Fal. But may I hope to see Amelia? Will she let me speak with her?

Mol. No indeed, my Lord; she is so offended at your late behaviour, that she will not even suffer us to mention your name to her.

L. Fal. Death and confusion! What a wretch have I made myself! Go, Polly, go and let her know that I must speak with her; inform her, that I have been active for her welfare; and have authority to release her from the information lodged against her.

Mol. I will let her know your anxiety, my Lord; but indeed I am afraid she will not see you.

L. Fal. She must, Polly, she must. The agonies of my mind are intolerable; tell her she must come, if it be but for a moment; or else, in the bitterness of despair, I fear I shall break into her apartment, and throw myself at her feet.

Mol.

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Mol. Lud ! you frighten me out of my wits. Have a little patience, and I'll tell my mistress what a taking you are in.

L. Fal. Fly then ! I can taste no comfort, till I hear her resolution. [Exit Molly.]

Lord Falbridge alone.

How culpably have I acted towards the most amiable of her sex ! But I will make her every reparation in my power. The warmth and sincerity of my repentance shall extort forgiveness from her. By heaven, she comes !—Death ! how sensibly does an ungenerous action abase us ! I am conscious of the superiority of her virtue, and almost dread the encounter.

Enter Amelia.

Amel. I understand, my Lord, that by your application I am held free of the charge laid against me ; and that I am once more entirely at liberty. I am truly sensible of your good offices, and thank you for the trouble you have taken. [going.]

L. Fal. Stay, Madam ! do not leave me in still greater distraction than you found me. If my zeal to serve you has had any weight with you, it must have inspired you with more favourable dispositions towards me.

Amel. You must pardon me, my Lord, if I cannot so soon forget a very late transaction. After that, all your proceedings alarm me : nay, even your present zeal to serve me creates new suspicions, while I cannot but be doubtful of the motives from which it proceeds.

L. Fal. Cruel Amelia ; for, guilty as I am, I must complain, since it was your own diffidence that was in part the occasion of my crime.—Why did you conceal your rank and condition from me ? Why did not you tell me, that you were the daughter of the unhappy Sir William Douglas ?

Amel.

Amel. Who told you that I was so, my Lord?

L. Fal. Nay, do not deny it now : it is in vain to attempt to conceal it any longer ; it was the main purport of my letter to apprize you of my knowledge of it.

Amel. Your letter, my Lord !

L. Fal. Yes ; wild as it was, it was the offspring of compunction and remorse ; and if it conveyed the dictates of my soul, it spoke me the truest of penitents. You did not disdain to read it sure !

Amel. Indeed, my Lord, I never received any letter from you.

L. Fal. Not received any ! I sent it this very morning. My own servant was the messenger. What can this mean ? Has he betrayed me ? At present, suffer me to compensate, as far as possible, for the wrongs I have done you : receive my hand and heart, and let an honourable marriage obliterate the very idea of my past conduct.

Amel. No, my Lord ; you have discovered me, it is true : I am the daughter of Sir William Douglas. Judge for yourself then, and think how I ought to look upon a man, who has insulted my distress, and endeavoured to tempt me to dishonour my family.

L. Fal. Your justice must acquit me of the intention of that offence, since at that time I was ignorant of your illustrious extraction.

Amel. It may be so ; yet your excuse is but an aggravation of the crime. You imagined me, perhaps, to be of as low and mean an origin, as you thought me poor and unhappy. You supposed that I had no title to any dowry but my honour, no dependance but on my virtue ; and yet you attempted to rob me of that virtue, which was the only jewel that could raise the meanness of my birth, or support me under my misfortunes ; which, instead of relieving, you chose to make the pandar to your vile inclinations.

L. Fal. Thou most amiable of thy sex, how I adore thee ! Even thy resentment renders thee more lovely in my eyes, and makes thee, if possible, dearer to me than

than

48 The ENGLISH MERCHANT,

than ever. Nothing but our union can ever make me happy.

Amet. Such an union must not, cannot be.

L. Fal. Why? What should forbid it?

Amet. My father.

L. Fal. Your father! where is he? In whatever part of the world he now resides, I will convey you to him, and he shall ratify our happiness.

Enter Molly, hastily.

Mol. Oh lord, Madam! here's the angry lady coming again; she that made such a racket this morning.

Amet. Lady Alton?

Mol. Yes, Madam.

L. Fal. Lady Alton! Confusion! Stay, Madam.

[to Amelia, who is going.]

Amet. No, my Lord; I have endured one affront from her already to day; why should I expose myself to a second? Her Ladyship, you know, has a prior claim to your attention. *[Exit.]*

L. Fal. Distraction! I had a thousand things to say to her.—Go, my dear Polly, follow my Amelia! Plead earnestly in my behalf; urge all the tenderest things that fancy can suggest, and return to me as soon as Lady Alton is departed!

Mol. I will, my Lord. Oh lud! here she is, as I am alive! *[Exit.]*

L. Fal. Abandoned by Amelia! and hunted by this fury! I shall run wild.

Enter Lady Alton.

L. Alt. You may well turn away from me; at length I have full conviction of your baseness. I am now assured of my own shame, and your falsehood. Perfidious monster!

L. Fal. It is unjust to tax me with perfidy, Madam. I have rather acted with too much sincerity. I long ago

ago frankly declared to you the utter impossibility of our reconciliation.

L. Alt. What! after having made your addresses to me! After having sworn the most inviolable affection for me! Oh, thou arch-deceiver!

L. Fal. I never deceived you : when I professed a passion, I really entertained one ; when I made my addresses to you, I wished to call you my wife.

L. Alt. And what can you alledge in excuse of your falsehood? Have you not been guilty of the blackest perjury?

L. Fal. The change of my sentiments needs no excuse from me, Madam ; you were yourself the occasion of it.—In spite of the torrent of fashion, and the practice of too many others of my rank in life, I have a relish for domestick happiness ; and have always wished for a wife, who might render my home a delightful refuge from the cares and bustle of the world abroad. These were my views with you ; but, thank heaven, your outrageous temper happily betrayed itself in good time, and convinced me that my sole aim in marriage would be frustrated : for I could neither have been happy myself, nor have made you so.

L. Alt. Paltry evasion ! You have abandoned me for your Amelia ; you have meanly quitted a person of letters, a woman of rank and condition, for an illiterate vagabond, a needy adventurer.

L. Fal. The person you mention, Madam, is indeed the opposite of yourself ; she is all meekness, grace, and virtue.

L. Alt. Provoking traitor ! You urge me past all sufferance. I meant to expostulate, but you oblige me to invective.—But, have a care ! You are not so secure as you suppose yourself ; and I may revenge myself sooner than you imagine.

L. Fal. I am aware of your vindictive disposition, Madam ; for I know that you are more envious than jealous, and rather violent than tender ; but the present object of my affections shall be placed above your resentment, and challenge your respect,

L. Alt.

50 The ENGLISH MERCHANT,

L. Alt. Away, fond man! I know that object of your affections better than yourself; I know who she is; I know who the stranger is that arrived for her this morning; I know all: men more powerful than yourself shall be apprised of the whole immediately; and within these two hours, nay, within this hour, you shall see the unworthy object, for which you have slighted me, with all that is dear to her and you, torn away from you perforce. [Going.]

L. Fal. Ha! how's this? Stay, Madam! Explain yourself! But one word; do but hear me.

L. Alt. No; I disdain to hear you: I scorn all explanation. I have discovered the contemptible cause of your inconstancy, and know you to be mean, base, false, treacherous, and perfidious. You have forfeited my tenderness, and be assured you shall feel the effects of my revenge. [Exit.]

L. Fal. What does she mean? The stranger that arrived to-day!—That arrived for my Amelia! Sure it cannot be. [pausing.] Is it possible that—[Re-enter Molly.] Ha, Polly! explain these riddles to me. Lady Alton threatens me, she threatens my Amelia: does she know any thing? Her fury will transport her to every extravagance; how dreadful is jealousy in a woman!

Mol. Ay, it is a dreadful thing, indeed, my Lord. Well! heaven send me always to be in love, and never to be jealous!

L. Fal. But she talked of tearing Amelia from me perforce—And then some stranger—She threatens *him* too: what is it she means?

Mol. What! a gentleman that came to Madam Amelia? [alarmed.]

L. Fal. Yes, to Amelia; and arrived this very day, she says.

Mol. We are ruined for ever: she means Sir William Douglas!

L. Fal. The father of my Amelia! Is he here?

Mol. Yes, my Lord; I was bound to secrecy; but I can't help telling you the whole truth, because I am sure you will do all in your power to be of service to us.

L. Fal.

A COMEDY.

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L. Fal. You know my whole soul, Polly: This outrageous woman's malice shall be defeated.

Mol. Heaven send it may!

L. Fal. Be assured, it shall: do not alarm your mistress; I fly to serve her, and will return as soon as possible.

Mol. I shall be miserable till we see you again, my Lord. [Exit.

L. Fal. And now, good heaven, that art the protection of innocence, second my endeavours! enable me to repair the affront I have offered to injured virtue, and let me relieve the unhappy from their distresses! [Exit.

F 2

A C T



A C T V.

S C E N E *continues.*

Lord Falbridge and Molly meeting.

Mol. **O**H, my Lord! I am glad to see you returned.

L. Fal. Where is your mistress? [*eagerly.*]

Mol. In her own chamber.

L. Fal. And where is Sir William Douglas?

Mol. With my mistress.

L. Fal. And have there been no officers here to apprehend them?

Mol. Officers! No, my Lord. Officers! you frighten me. I was in hopes, by seeing your Lordship so soon again, that there was some good news for us.

L. Fal. Never was any thing so unfortunate. The noble persons, to whom I meant to make application, were out of town; nor could by any means be seen or spoken with, till to-morrow morning; and to add to my distraction, I learnt that a new information had been made, and a new warrant issued to apprehend Sir William Douglas and Amelia.

Mol. Oh dear! What can we do then?

L. Fal. Do! I shall run mad. Go to your Mistress, and Sir William, and inform them of their danger. Every moment is precious, but perhaps they may yet have time to escape.

Mol. I will, my Lord! [*going.*]

L. Fal. Stay! [*Molly returns*] My chariot is at the door; tell them, not to wait for any other carriage, but to get into that, and drive away immediately.

Mol.

A COMEDY.

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Mol. I will, my Lord ! Oh dear ! I never was so terrified in all my life. [Exit.]

Lord Falbridge alone.

If I can but save them now, we may gain time for mediation. Ha ! what noise ? Are the officers coming ! Who's here ?

Enter La France.

La Fr. Milor, Mons. le Duc de——

L. Fal. Sirrah ! Villain ! You have been the occasion of all this mischief. By your carelessness, or treachery, Lady Alton has intercepted my letter to Amelia.

La Fr. Lèdy Altón ?

L. Fal. Yes, dog ; did not I send you here this morning with a letter ?

La Fr. Oui, Milor.

L. Fal. And did you bring it here, rascal !

La Fr. Oui, Milor.

L. Fal. No, sirrah. You did not bring it ; the lady never received any letter from me ; she told me so herself ; whom did you give it to ? [*La France hesitates.*] Speak, sirrah ; or I'll shake your soul out of your body. [Shaking him.]

La Fr. I giv it to——

L. Fal. Who, rascal ?

La Fr. Monsieur Spatter.

L. Fal. Mr. Spatter !

La Fr. Oui, Milor ; he promis to giv it to Mademoiselle Amelie, vid his own hand.

L. Fal. I shall soon know the truth of that, Sir ; for yonder is Mr. Spatter himself : run, and tell him I desire to speak with him !

La Fr. Oui, Milor ; *ma foi*. I vas very near kesh ; I never was in more *vilain embarras* in all my life.

[Exit.]

Lord Falbridge alone.

My letter's falling into the hands of that fellow, accounts for every thing. The contents instructed him concerning Amelia. What a wretch I am ! Destined every way to be of prejudice to that virtue, which I am bound to adore.

Re-enter La France with Spatter.

Spat. Monsieur La France tells me, that your Lordship desires to speak with me ; what are your commands, my Lord ? *(pertly.)*

L. Fal. The easy impudence of the rascal puts me out of all patience. *(to himself.)*

Spat. My Lord !

L. Fal. The last time I saw you, Sir, you were rewarded for the good you had done ; you must expect now to be chastised for your mischief.

Spat. Mischief, my Lord ?

L. Fal. Yes, Sir ; where is that letter of mine, which La France tells me, he gave you to deliver to a young lady of this house ?

Spat. Oh the devil ! *(apart.)* Letter, my Lord ? *(hesitates.)*

L. Fal. Yes, letter, Sir ; did not you give it him, La France ?

La. Fr. Oui, Milor !

Spat. Y—e—e—s, yes, my Lord ; I had the letter of Monsieur La France, to be sure, my Lord ; but—but——

L. Fal. But what, firrah ? give me the letter immediately ; and if I find that the seal has been broken, I will break every bone in your skin.

Spat. For heaven's sake, my Lord ! *(feeling in his pockets.)* I—I—I have not got the letter about me at present, my Lord ; but if you will give me leave to step to my apartment, I'll bring it you immediately.

(Offering to go.)

L. Fal. *(stopping him.)* No, no ; that will not do, Sir ;

Sir ; you shall not stir, I promise you.—Look ye, rascal ! tell me, what is become of my letter, or I will be the death of you this instant. *[Drawing,*

Spat. *[kneeling.]* Put up your sword, my Lord ; put up your sword ; and I will tell you every thing in the world. Indeed, I will.

L. Fal. Well, Sir ; be quick then !

[Putting up his sword.]

Spat. Lady Alton——

L. Fal. Lady Alton ! I thought so ; go on, Sir.

Spat. Lady Alton, my Lord, desired me to procure her all the intelligence in my power, concerning every thing that past between your Lordship and Amelia.

L. Fal. Well, Sir ; what then ?

Spat. A little patience, I entreat your Lordship. Accordingly, to oblige her Ladyship—one must oblige the ladies, you know, my Lord—I did keep a pretty sharp look-out, I must confess : and this morning, meeting Monsieur La France, with the letter from your Lordship in his charge, I very readily gave him five guineas of her Ladyship's bounty-money, to put it into my hands.

La. Fr. *Oh Diable ! me voila perdu ?* *(aside.)*

L. Fal. How ! A bribe, rascal ? *(to La France.)*

La. Fr. *Ab, Mitor !* *(on his knees.)*

Spat. At the same price for every letter, he would have sold a whole mail, my Lord.

La. Fr. *Ayez pitié de moi !* *(holding up his hands.)*

L. Fal. Betray the confidence I reposed in you ?

Spat. He offered me the letter of his own accord, my Lord.

La. Fr. No such ting, *en verité*, Mitor !

Spat. Very true, I can assure your Lordship.

L. Fal. Well, well ; I shall chastise him at my leisure. At present, Sir, do you return me my letter.

Spat. I—I have it not about me, my Lord.

L. Fal. Where is it, rascal ? tell me this instant, or——

La. Fr. *Lèdy Altón——*

L. Fal. *(to Spatter.)* What ! has *she* got it ? speak, Sirrah !

Spat.

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Spat. She has indeed, my Lord.

L. Fal. Are not you a couple of villains?

La Fr. Oui, Milor.

Spat. Yes, my Lord!

} *both speak at once.*

L. Fal. (to Spat.) But hold, Sir! a word more with you! As you seem to be Lady Alton's chief agent, I must desire some further information from you.

Spat. Any thing in my power, my Lord.

L. Fal. I can account for her knowledge of Amelia by means of my letter: but how did she discover Sir William Douglas?

Spat. I told her, my Lord.

L. Fal. But how did you discover him yourself.

Spat. By listening, my Lord.

L. Fal. By listening!

Spat. Yes, by listening, my Lord! let me but once be about a house, and I'll engage to clear it, like a ventilator, my Lord. There is not a door to a single apartment in this house, but I have planted my ear at the keyhole.

L. Fal. And were these the means, by which you procured your intelligence?

Spat. Yes, my Lord.

L. Fal. Impossible.

Spat. Oh dear! nothing so easy; this is nothing at all, my Lord! I have given an account of the plays in our Journal, for three months together, without being nearer the stage than the pit passage; and I have collected the debates of a whole session, for the Magazine, only by attending in the lobby.

L. Fal. Precious rascal!—Ha! who comes here? Lady Alton herself again, as I live.

Spat. [apart.] The devil she is! I wish I was out of the house.

Enter Lady Alton.

L. Alt. What! still here, my Lord? still witnessing to your own shame, and the justice of my resentment?

L. Fal.

L. Fal. Yes, I am still here, Madam ; and sorry to be made a witness of your cruelty and meanness ; of your descending to arts, so much beneath your rank ; and practices, so unworthy of your sex.

L. Alt. You talk in riddles, my Lord !

L. Fal. This gentleman shall explain them. Here, Madam ! here is the engine of your malice, the instrument of your vengeance, your prime minister, Mr. Spatter.

L. Alt. What have I to do with Mr. Spatter ?

L. Fal. To do mischief, to intercept letters, and break them open ; to overhear private conversations, and betray them ; to——

L. Alt. Have you laid any thing of this kind to my charge, Sir ? *[to Spatter.]*

Spat. I have been obliged to speak the truth, though much against my will, indeed, Madam.

L. Alt. The truth ! thou father of lies, did ever any truth proceed from thee ? What ! is his Lordship your new patron ! A fit Mæcenas for thee, thou scandal to the *belles lettres* !

L. Fal. Your rage at this detection is but a fresh conviction of your guilt.

L. Alt. Do not triumph, Monster ! you shall still feel the superiority I have over you. The object of your wishes is no longer under your protection ; the officers of the government entered the house at the same time with myself, with a warrant to seize both Amelia and her father.

L. Fal. Confusion ! Are they not gone then ? La France ! villain ! run and bring me word !

La Fr. I go, Milor !

L. Alt. Do not flatter yourself with any hopes ; they have not escaped ; here they are, secured in proper hands.

L. Fal. Death and distraction ! now I am completely miserable.

Enter

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Enter Sir W. Douglas, Amelia, Owen, and Officers.

L. Alt. Yes, your misery is complete indeed ; and so shall be my revenge. Oh ! your servant, Madam, [*turning to Amelia*] you now see to what a condition your pride and obstinacy have reduced you. Did not I bid you tremble at the consequences ?

Amel. It was here alone that I was vulnerable. [*holding her father's hand.*] Oh, Madam, [*turning to Lady Alton*] by the virtues that should adorn your rank, by the tenderness of your sex, I conjure you, pity my distress ! do but release my father ; and there are no concessions, however humiliating, which you may not exact from me.

L. Alt. Those concessions now come too late, Madam. If I were even inclined to relieve you, at present it is not in my power (*haughtily.*) Lord Falbridge perhaps may have more interest. (*with a sneer.*)

L. Fal. Cruel, insulting woman ! (*to Lady Alton.*) Do not alarm yourself, my Amelia !—Do not be concerned, Sir ! (*to Sir William*) Your enemies shall still be disappointed. Altho' ignorant of your arrival, I have for some time past exerted all my interest in your favour, and by the mediation of those still more powerful, I do not despair of success. Your case is truly a compassionate one ; and in that breast, from which alone mercy can proceed, thank heaven, there is the greatest reason to expect it.

Sir W. I am obliged to you for your concern, Sir.

L. Fal. Oh, I owe you all this, and much more.—But this is no time to speak of my offences or repentance.

L. Alt. This is mere trifling. I thought you knew on what occasion you came hither, Sir. [*to the Officer.*]

Officer. Your reproof is too just, Madam. I attend you, Sir. (*to Sir William.*)

L. Fal. Hold ! Let me prevail on you, Sir, [*to the Officer.*] to suffer them to remain here till to-morrow morning. I will answer for the consequences.

Officer. Pardon me, my Lord ! we should be happy to oblige you ; but must discharge the duty of our office.

L. Fal.

L. Fal. Distraction!

Sir W. Come then! we follow you, Sir! Be comforted, my Amelia! for my sake, be comforted! Wretched as I am, your anxiety shocks me more than my own misfortunes.

(As they are going out, enter Freeport.

Free. Hey day! what now! the officers here again! I thought we had satisfied you this morning. What is the meaning of all this?

Officer. This will inform you, Sir.

(giving the warrant.

Free. How's this? Let me see! [reading.] This is to require you—um um—the bodies of William Ford and Amelia Walton—um—um—suspected persons—um—um—Well, well! I see what this is: but you will accept of bail, Sir.

Officer. No, Sir; this case is not bailable, and we have been already reprimanded for taking your recognizance this morning.

Sir W. Thou good man! I shall ever retain the most lively sense of your behaviour: but your kind endeavours to preserve the poor remainder of my proscribed life are in vain. We must submit to our destiny.

(all going.

Free. Hold! hold! one word, I beseech you, Sir! (to the Officer) a minute or two will make no difference—Bail then, it seems, will not do, Sir?

Officer. No, Sir.

Free. Well, well; then I have something here that will perhaps.

[feeling in his pocket.

L. Fal. How!

L. Ali. What does he mean?

Free. No, it is not there.—It is in t'other pocket, I believe. Here, Sir William! [producing a parchment:] Ask the gentleman if *that* will not do.—But first of all read it yourself, and let us hear how you like the contents.

Sir W. What do I see! [opening and perusing it.] My pardon! the full and free pardon of my offences! Oh heaven! and is it to you then, to you, Sir, that

I

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I owe all this?—Thus, thus let me shew my gratitude to my benefactor! (*falling at his feet.*)

Free. Get up, get up, Sir William! I thank heaven and the most gracious of monarchs. You have very little obligation to me, I promise you.

Amel. My father restored! Then I am the happiest of women.

L. Fal. A pardon! I am transported.

L. Al. How's this? a pardon!

Free. Under the great seal, Madam.

L. Alt. Confusion! what am I baffled at last then? Am I disappointed even of my revenge?—Thou officious fool! [*to Freeport.*] May these wretches prove as great a torment to you, as they have been to me! As for thee, [*to Lord Falbridge*] thou perfidious monster, may thy guilt prove thy punishment! May you obtain the unworthy union you desire! May your wife prove as false to you, as you have been to me! May you be followed, like Orestes, with the furies of a guilty conscience; find your error when it is too late; and die in all the horrors of despair! [*Exit.*]

Free. There goes a woman of quality for you! What little actions! and what a great soul!—Ha! Master Spatter! where are you going?

[*to Spatter, who is sneaking off.*]

Spat. Following the Muse, Sir! [*pointing after Lady Alton.*] But if you have any further commands, or his Lordship should have occasion for me to write his Epithalamium—

L. Fal. Peace, wretch! sleep in a whole skin, and be thankful! I would solicit mercy myself, and have not leisure to punish you. Be gone, Sir!

Spat. I am obliged to your Lordship—This affair will make a good article for the Evening-post to-night, however. [*Aside, and Exit.*]

Sir W. How happy has this reverse of fortune made me!—But my surprise is almost equal to my joy. May we beg you, Sir, [*to Freeport*] to inform us how your benevolence has effected what seems almost a miracle in my favour?

Free.

Free. In two words then, Sir William, this happy event is chiefly owing to your old friend, the late Lord Brumpton.

Sir W. Lord Brumpton!

Free. Yes; honest Owen there told me, that his Lordship had been employed in soliciting your pardon. Did not you, Owen?

Owen. I did, Sir.

Free. Upon hearing that, and perceiving the danger you were in, I went immediately to the present Lord Brumpton; who is a very honest fellow, and one of the oldest acquaintance I have in the world. He, at my instance, immediately made the necessary application; and guess how agreeably we were surprized to hear that the late lord had already been successful, and that the pardon had been made out on the very morning of the day his Lordship died. Away went I, as fast as a pair of horses could carry me, to fetch it; and should certainly have prevented this last arrest, if the warrant to apprehend you, as dangerous persons, had not issued under your assumed names of William Ford and Amelia Walton, against whom the information had been laid. But, however, it has only served to prevent your running away, when the danger was over; for, at present, Sir William, thank heaven and his majesty, you are a whole man again; and you have nothing to do but to make a legal appearance, and to plead the pardon I have brought you, to absolve you from all informations.

L. Fal. Thou honest, excellent man! How happily have you supplied, what I failed to accomplish!

Free. Ay, I heard that your Lordship had been busy.—You had more friends at court than one, Sir William, I promise you.

Sir W. I am overwhelmed with my sudden good fortune, and am poor even in thanks. Teach me, Mr. Freeport, teach me how to make some acknowledgment for your extraordinary generosity!

Free. I'll tell you what, Sir William. Notwithstanding your daughter's pride, I took a liking to her, the moment I saw her.

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L. Fal. Ha ! What's this !

Free. What's the matter, my Lord ?

L. Fal. Nothing. Go on, Sir.

Free. Why then, to confess the truth, I am afraid that my benevolence, which you have all been pleased to praise so highly, had some little leaven of self-interest in it ; and I was desirous to promote Amelia's happiness more ways than one.

L. Fal. Then I am the veriest wretch that ever existed.—But take her, Sir ! for I must confess that you have deserved her by your proceedings ; and that I, fool and villain that I was, have forfeited her by mine.

(going.)

Free. Hold, hold ! one word before you go, if you please, my Lord ! You may kill yourself for aught I know, but you shan't lay your death at my door, I promise you. I had a kindness for Amelia, I must confess ; but in the course of my late negotiation for Sir William, hearing of your Lordship's pretensions, I dropt all thoughts of her. It is a maxim with me, to do good wherever I can, but always to abstain from doing mischief.—Now, as I can't make the lady happy myself, I would fain put her into the hands of those that can.—So, if you would oblige me, Sir William, let me join these two young folks together, [*joining their hands.*] and do you say Amen to it.

Sir W. With all my heart !—You can have no objection, Amelia. [*Amelia bursts into tears.*]

L. Fal. How bitterly do those tears reproach me ! It shall be the whole business of my future life to atone for them.

Amel. Your actions this day, and your solicitude for my father, have redeemed you in my good opinion ; and the consent of Sir William, seconded by so powerful an advocate as Mr. Freeport, cannot be contended with. Take my hand, my Lord ! a virtuous passion may inhabit the purest breast ; and I am not ashamed to confess, that I had conceived a partiality for you, till your own conduct turned my heart against you ; and if my relentment has given you any pain,
when

when I consider the occasion, I must own that I cannot repent it.

L. Fal. Mention it no more, my love, I beseech you! You may justly blame your lover, I confess; but I will never give you cause to complain of your husband.

Free. I don't believe you will. I give you joy, my Lord! I give you all joy. As for you, Madam, [*to Amelia*] do but shew the world that you can bear prosperity, as well as you have sustained the shocks of adversity, and there are few women, who may not wish to be an Amelia.

THE END.



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